

Conservation Committee

Committee Members: L. C. Arias, B. S. Arbogast, E. Beever, B. J. Bergstrom (Chair), A. Cheeseman, A. D. Davidson, N. Dawson, A. W. Ferguson, A. T. Ford, B. J. Gaston, A. J. Giordano, R. L. Honeycutt, T. J. Jessen, D. M. Kaufman, A. Krevitz, J. Malaney, R. A. Medellin, A. Morzillo, R. A. Ojeda, L. A. Randa, M. Schadler, S. R. Sheffield, W. Smith, N. Upham, E. Wilson.

Mission:

The Conservation Committee (CC) was established by the ASM in 1927, a few years after the Society passed a resolution condemning the unscientific and propagandistic extermination campaign against predators at its 4th annual meeting in 1924. First known as the Conservation of Land Mammals Committee, the committee's name was changed to the Conservation Committee in 2002 to reflect the fact that it dealt with conservation issues that included all mammals. In 2002–2003, the Aldo Leopold Conservation Award subcommittee that CC had recently established was moved to full standing committee status. The CC promotes research, education, and science-based solutions to conservation and management of native mammals in North America and globally.

Information Items:

(1) Adam Ahlers rotated off the Committee this year, and we thank him for his service. The Committee welcomes new members Erik Beever, Alex Krevitz, Winston Smith, and Evan Wilson.

(2) Activities of the ASM CC during 2014-2015:

(a) The CC sponsored a special thematic session on Recent Advances in Mammalian Conservation at the June 2014 ASM conference in Oklahoma City.

(b) CC and President E. Lacey collaborated with Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) on a joint position letter (dated 31 July 2014) asking for a reversal of the decision by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Regional Director to overturn the findings of staff biologists and two independent peer review panels to list the wolverine (*Gulo gulo*) as threatened, in part due to climate change. ASM had previously written in agreement with the FWS determination (February 2013) that wolverine should be listed, and an ASM position letter in 1998 first recommended listing the wolverine.

An article in Science magazine referenced this letter:

<http://news.sciencemag.org/biology/2014/08/too-much-climate-uncertainty-declare-wolverines-endangered-says-u-s-agency>

(c) CC and President E. Lacey collaborated with SCB on a joint letter (22 September 2014) to FWS to comment on proposed revisions to the management plan for Mexican gray wolves (*Canis lupus baileyi*).

(d) CC researched and drafted a letter, edited and signed by President Lacey, dated 14 January 2015, in response to a call for public comment by USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services on an Environmental Assessment of their program of lethal control of carnivores in Idaho. ASM recommended a transition largely to nonlethal methods and education of livestock owners in their use.

(e) CC and Pres. E. Lacey conferred with representatives of 6 other scientific societies and signed on to a letter (20 January 2015) urging USDA Secretary Vilsack to accelerate the transition away from clear-cut logging in the Tongass National Forest, Alaska.

(f) CC helped draft and edit, and several of its members signed, a scientist sign-on letter (28 January 2015) to members of Congress that advised against the delisting of all gray wolves (*Canis lupus*), except the Mexican subspecies, that were not already delisted (including areas in the mountainous West and Northeast where suitable habitat exists but no breeding populations have become established).

(g) NOTE: copies of the position letters mentioned above can be read on the Committee's web page at <http://www.mammalsociety.org/committees/conservation#tab3>

Action Items: None.

Respectfully submitted,
Brad Bergstrom, Chair
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